

Mass Mon., Tues., Wed.,
7:40 Dillon for
Father of Joe Simons...

University of Notre Dame
Religious Bulletin
May 2, 1942

...at request
of Sophomore
Chemical Engineers.

Ave atque Vale

Some of you are leaving Notre Dame at the close of this semester with the certainty that you will not be able to return again. Whether you are going into the armed service or into civilian life, your going is cloaked with fear. . . a fear which arises from uncertainty. . . uncertainty both as regards your new way of life and how you are expected to face it. You are worried about your morale.

What is Morale?

Morale isn't something which is given to you. It is not handed out in a canteen nor is it developed in a Service Center. It can't be given to you. It is something you have to work for.

Morale is based on morality from which it stems. It is built on a proper regard for your duties to God-- to your neighbor-- and to yourself. It isn't a matter of choice; it's a matter of obligation. It is a matter of strict principles-- the principles which guided those who are honored in the memorial door of our church, the men who died for God and for Country and for Notre Dame.

You will take certain things with you wherever you go. You will take your soul, and your conscience, and your moral principles. Those things cannot be checked for the duration. And you will take them into an amoral world. You will be meeting men who ignore the existence of a soul; who deny the power of conscience; who scoff at the binding power of a moral code. You will be expected to face a bullet, but you will not be expected to face a temptation. They will demand that you give up your life, but not that you give up a sinful pleasure. They will seek to outlaw infection, while they condone sin.

According to the latest reports, released only this month by the American Social Hygiene Association: in the previous war "our soldiers suffered more casualties from syphilis and gonorrhoea than from wounds in battle. They lost more than seven million days' time, which is equal to a full year's absence of about 19,000 men." You say, "What a waste of man power!" I say, "What a loss of manhood!" Those were the ones with tainted bodies; the Divine Record Book has inscribed upon it the names of those who have brought disease and death to their souls. The American Social Hygiene Association can tell us the number of hours lost, but only God knows the number of souls lost.

What is the explanation?

If you ignore the soul in your concept of man, all that remains is the animal. If you ignore the soul, you must ignore virtue. Even in these days of synthetics, there is no substitute for virtue. Only virtue, which in its ultimate significance means power, can give a man the moral fiber to perform heroic deeds. Self-conquest in one's own life must come before any other conquest and it alone can give meaning and fullness to any other victory. You have had a tradition of prayer and sacrifice which is the Spirit of Notre Dame. If you follow that tradition, you need have no fear for your morale. (From a Senior Novena Conference by Father Norman J. Johnson, C.S.C.)